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EXAMINER				
FIDEL, DAVID				
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Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.

The time period for reply, if any, is set in the attached communication.

Office Action Summary**Application No.**

10/603,587

Applicant(s)

HASCOET ET AL.

Examiner

David T. Fidei

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-- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address --
Period for Reply

A SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD FOR REPLY IS SET TO EXPIRE 3 MONTH(S) OR THIRTY (30) DAYS, WHICHEVER IS LONGER, FROM THE MAILING DATE OF THIS COMMUNICATION.

- Extensions of time may be available under the provisions of 37 CFR 1.136(a). In no event, however, may a reply be timely filed after SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- If NO period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- Failure to reply within the set or extended period for reply will, by statute, cause the application to become ABANDONED (35 U.S.C. § 133). Any reply received by the Office later than three months after the mailing date of this communication, even if timely filed, may reduce any earned patent term adjustment. See 37 CFR 1.704(b).

Status

- 1) ☐ Responsive to communication(s) filed on ____.
- 2a) ☐ This action is **FINAL**. 2b) ☒ This action is non-final.
- 3) ☐ Since this application is in condition for allowance except for formal matters, prosecution as to the merits is closed in accordance with the practice under *Ex parte Quayle*, 1935 C.D. 11, 453 O.G. 213.

Disposition of Claims

- 4) ☒ Claim(s) 1-17 is/are pending in the application.
- 4a) Of the above claim(s) ____ is/are withdrawn from consideration.
- 5) ☐ Claim(s) ____ is/are allowed.
- 6) ☒ Claim(s) 17 is/are rejected.
- 7) ☐ Claim(s) ____ is/are objected to.
- 8) ☐ Claim(s) ____ are subject to restriction and/or election requirement.

Application Papers

- 9) ☐ The specification is objected to by the Examiner.
- 10) ☒ The drawing(s) filed on 25 June 2003 is/are: a) ☒ accepted or b) ☐ objected to by the Examiner.
- Applicant may not request that any objection to the drawing(s) be held in abeyance. See 37 CFR 1.85(a).
- Replacement drawing sheet(s) including the correction is required if the drawing(s) is objected to. See 37 CFR 1.121(d).
- 11) ☐ The oath or declaration is objected to by the Examiner. Note the attached Office Action or form PTO-152.

Priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119

- 12) ☐ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).
- a) ☐ All b) ☐ Some * c) ☐ None of:
1. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.
 2. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. ____.
 3. ☐ Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this National Stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).

* See the attached detailed Office action for a list of the certified copies not received.

Attachment(s)

- 1) ☒ Notice of References Cited (PTO-892)
- 2) ☐ Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948)
- 3) ☒ Information Disclosure Statement(s) (PTO/SI/02)
- Paper No(s)/Mail Date 11/20/03
- 4) ☐ Interview Summary (PTO-413)
- Paper No(s)/Mail Date ____
- 5) ☐ Notice of Informal Patent Application
- 6) ☐ Other: ____

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 112

1. The following is a quotation of the second paragraph of 35 U.S.C. 112:

The specification shall conclude with one or more claims particularly pointing out and distinctly claiming the subject matter which the applicant regards as his invention.

2. Claims 1-17 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 112, second paragraph, as being indefinite for failing to particularly point out and distinctly claim the subject matter which applicant regards as the invention.

In claim 1 a device for protecting a cover is recited where it is unclear if the protecting cover is a positive part of the claimed subject matter or not. The claim is being treated as a combination claim. A hollow tubular protective element which is open at both ends, referred to as a protective tube is confusing as to what the terminology is. Whether the structure is to be referred to as a hollow tubular protective element or a protective tube.

Regarding claims 4 and 8, the phrase "in particular" renders the claim indefinite because it is unclear whether the limitation(s) following the phrase are part of the claimed invention.

Regarding claim 5, the phrase "for example" renders the claim indefinite because it is unclear whether the limitation(s) following the phrase are part of the claimed invention. See MPEP § 2173.05(d).

In claim 6, it is not clear what "its" refers too.

In claim 7, the phrase "e.g." renders the claim indefinite because it is not clear whether the limitations following the phrase are part of the claimed invention.

Regarding claims 10 and 13, the phrase "such as" renders the claim indefinite because it is unclear whether the limitations following the phrase are part of the claimed invention. See MPEP § 2173.05(d).

In claim 11, it is unclear what the device refers to that is sterilized and the term in particular renders the claim indefinite because it is unclear whether the limitations following the phrase are part of the claimed invention.

Claim 12 employs the language “preferably”, “e.g.” and “such as” all of which render the claim indefinite for the aforementioned reasons. Also, the outside surface of an intracorporeal probe has no antecedent basis.

In claim 14, the rod has no antecedent basis and it is unclear what rod the rod refers too.

In claim 15, the phrase in particular renders the claim indefinite for the aforementioned reasons. The phrase optionally does not positively set forth a sterile cover. The rod and the protective element have no antecedent basis.

Regarding claim 16, the word “means” is preceded by the word(s) “by” in an attempt to use a “means” clause to recite a claim element as a means for performing a specified function. However, since no function is specified by the word(s) preceding “means,” it is impossible to determine the equivalents of the element, as required by 35 U.S.C. 112, sixth paragraph. See *Ex parte Klumb*, 159 USPQ 694 (Bd. App. 1967).

Double Patenting

3. The nonstatutory double patenting rejection is based on a judicially created doctrine grounded in public policy (a policy reflected in the statute) so as to prevent the unjustified or improper timewise extension of the “right to exclude” granted by a patent and to prevent possible harassment by multiple assignees. A nonstatutory obviousness-type double patenting rejection is appropriate where the conflicting claims are not identical, but at least one examined application claim is not patentably distinct from the reference claim(s) because the examined application claim is either anticipated by, or would have been obvious over, the reference claim(s). See, e.g., *In re Berg*, 140 F.3d 1428, 46 USPQ2d 1226 (Fed. Cir. 1998); *In re Goodman*, 11 F.3d 1046, 29 USPQ2d 2010 (Fed. Cir. 1993); *In re Longi*, 759 F.2d 887, 225 USPQ 645 (Fed. Cir. 1985); *In re Van Ornum*, 686 F.2d 937, 214 USPQ 761 (CCPA 1982); *In re*

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Vogel, 422 F.2d 438, 164 USPQ 619 (CCPA 1970); and *In re Thorington*, 418 F.2d 528, 163 USPQ 644 (CCPA 1969).

A timely filed terminal disclaimer in compliance with 37 CFR 1.321(c) or 1.321(d) may be used to overcome an actual or provisional rejection based on a nonstatutory double patenting ground provided the conflicting application or patent either is shown to be commonly owned with this application, or claims an invention made as a result of activities undertaken within the scope of a joint research agreement.

Effective January 1, 1994, a registered attorney or agent of record may sign a terminal disclaimer. A terminal disclaimer signed by the assignee must fully comply with 37 CFR 3.73(b).

4. Claims 1-17 are rejected on the ground of nonstatutory obviousness-type double patenting as being unpatentable over claims 1-15 of U.S. Patent No. 6,605,034. Although the conflicting claims are not identical, they are not patentably distinct from each other because the current claims are broader than those previously patented essentially covering the prior patented subject matter.

5. Claims 1-17 are rejected on the ground of nonstatutory obviousness-type double patenting as being unpatentable over claims 1-18 of U.S. Patent No. 6,350,232. Although the conflicting claims are not identical, they are not patentably distinct from each other because the current claims are broader than those previously patented essentially covering the prior patented subject matter.

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 102

6. The following is a quotation of the appropriate paragraphs of 35 U.S.C. 102 that form the basis for the rejections under this section made in this Office action:

A person shall be entitled to a patent unless –

(b) the invention was patented or described in a printed publication in this or a foreign country or in public use or on sale in this country, more than one year prior to the date of application for patent in the United States.

7. Claims 1, 2, 4, 6, 7, 12 and 13 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(b) as being anticipated by Tanaka (US Patent no. 5,614,660). A device for protecting a cover is disclosed comprising a hollow tubular protective element 11 which is open at both ends that can be referred to as a protective tube. At least a portion of the cover 7 being placed inside the tube, the cover being flexible and in the form of a tube that is closed at one end and open at its other end, see figure 4.

As to claim 2, the device has means, such as a vacuum, facilitating insertion of the cover inside the protective tube.

As to claim 4, the protective tube has a plurality of means 11a, figure 5, enabling localized regions to be established in which the cover is not in contact with the inside wall of the protective tube.

As to claim 6, the cover is folded back over the protective tube at its end 7a remote from the closed end of the cover.

As to claim 7, the protective tube has an inside wall, and wherein the protective tube has means 3c for holding the cover substantially against the inside wall of the protective tube.

As to claim 12, the cover of figure 4 is of a length that is sufficient to cover the outside surface of an intracorporeal probe 3a.

As to claim 13, the cover 7 is made of a sterilizable flexible material.

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 103

8. The following is a quotation of 35 U.S.C. 103(a) which forms the basis for all obviousness rejections set forth in this Office action:

(a) A patent may not be obtained though the invention is not identically disclosed or described as set forth in section 102 of this title, if the differences between the subject matter sought to be patented and the prior art are

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such that the subject matter as a whole would have been obvious at the time the invention was made to a person having ordinary skill in the art to which said subject matter pertains. Patentability shall not be negated by the manner in which the invention was made.

9. The factual inquiries set forth in *Graham v. John Deere Co.*, 383 U.S. 1, 148 USPQ 459 (1966), that are applied for establishing a background for determining obviousness under 35

U.S.C. 103(a) are summarized as follows:

1. Determining the scope and contents of the prior art.
2. Ascertaining the differences between the prior art and the claims at issue.
3. Resolving the level of ordinary skill in the pertinent art.
4. Considering objective evidence present in the application indicating obviousness or nonobviousness.

10. Claim 11 is rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Tanaka (US Patent no. 5,614,660) in view of Rodsten (US Patent no. 5,895,374). Rodsten teaches that it is known to provide medical devices such as catheters being sterilized and sealed in packages transparent at least in part, see col. 3, lines 38-40. To provide the device being sterilized and in a sterilizable sealed package which is transparent at least in part would have been obvious in view of Rodsten, in order to provide a means for distributing the device for use.

Allowable Subject Matter

11. Claims 3, 5, 8-10 and 14-17 would be allowable if rewritten to overcome the rejection(s) under 35 U.S.C. 112, 2nd paragraph, set forth in this Office action and to include all of the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims.

12. Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to David T. Fidei whose telephone number is (571) 272-4553. The examiner can normally be reached on Monday - Friday 8:30 am - 4:30 pm.

If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, Mickey Yu can be reached on (571) 272-4562. The fax phone number for the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned is 571-273-8300.

Information regarding the status of an application may be obtained from the Patent Application Information Retrieval (PAIR) system. Status information for published applications may be obtained from either Private PAIR or Public PAIR. Status information for unpublished applications is available through Private PAIR only. For more information about the PAIR system, see <http://pair-direct.uspto.gov>. Should you have questions on access to the Private PAIR system, contact the Electronic Business Center (EBC) at 866-217-9197 (toll-free). If you would like assistance from a USPTO Customer Service Representative or access to the automated information system, call 800-786-9199 (IN USA OR CANADA) or 571-272-1000.

/David T. Fidei/
Primary Examiner, Art Unit 3728